THE METAMORPHOSIS OF PERSEPHONE

Ovid and the self-conscious Muse

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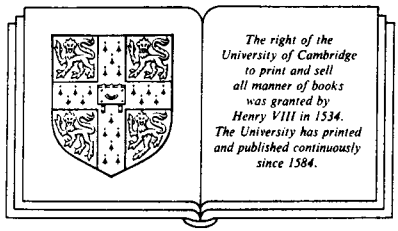

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE

NEW YORK NEW ROCHELLE MELBOURNE SYDNEY

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP
32 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10022, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

First published 1987

Printed in Great Britain by the University Press, Cambridge

British Library cataloguing in publication data

Hinds, Stephen
The metamorphosis of Persephone:
Ovid and the self-conscious Muse.
– (Cambridge classical studies)
1. Ovid. Metamorphosis
I. Title
871'.01 PA6519.M9

Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data

Hinds, Stephen.
The metamorphosis of Persephone.
(Cambridge classical studies)
Bibliography.
Includes indexes.
1. Ovid, 43 B.C. – 17 or 18 A.D. Metamorphoses.
2. Persephone (Greek deity) in literature.
3. Metamorphosis in literature.
I. Title. II. Series.
PA6519.M9H5 1987 873'.01 86-26923

ISBN 0 521 33506 X

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CHAPTER 1

METAMORPHOSES 5.256–64: THE HELICONIAN FOUNT

Two hundred and fifty lines into Book 5, the goddess Pallas brings Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to the home of the Muses:

> hactenus aurigenae comitem Tritonia fratri
> se dedit: inde cava circumdata nube Seriphon
> deserit, a dextra Cythno Gyaroque relictis,
> quaque super pontum via visa brevissima, Thebas
> virgineumque Helicona petit; quo monte potita
> constitit et doctas sic est adfata sorores[1]
> (*Met.* 5.250–5)

Ever since Hesiod's famous encounter at the beginning of the *Theogony* (most famously remembered by Callimachus in fragment 2 of the *Aetia*), the introduction into any poem of the Heliconian Muses,[2] patron goddesses of literature itself, has always been a moment for the poet to turn in on himself (or rather, perhaps, to stand outside himself) so as to contemplate more obtrusively than elsewhere the nature of his own craft. The narrative of the *Metamorphoses* embraces the whole world of Graeco-Roman myth from the Creation down to the Augustan present; but we may still reasonably expect Mount Helicon here in Book 5 to be more than just another setting, and its inhabitants more than just another group of mythological characters.

A cursory glance ahead at once suggests that Ovid is not unaware of his responsibilities to the tradition. We do indeed seem set to find out something about the pursuit of literature in this Heliconian section of the *Metamorphoses*: the main piece of action recounted here turns out to be nothing less than a contest for supremacy in poetic recitation, involving the Muses and a rival band of artists, the daughters of Pieros.

The Muses' entry in this contest, sung by Calliope and reproduced verbatim at *Met.* 5.341–661, is an account of the rape of the maiden goddess Persephone by Dis, king of the

Underworld, and of the quest for Persephone by her mother Ceres, goddess of agriculture. This will be the concern of chapters 2–6. However, in the present chapter I want to dwell a little on the setting which will see the tale of Persephone told; and to consider in its own right, as a sort of *hors d'œuvre* to my main study, that other myth which has brought about Pallas' visit to Mount Helicon in the first place: viz., the tale of the origin of the Hippocrene.

> 'fama novi fontis nostras pervenit ad aures,
> dura Medusaei quem praepetis ungula rupit.
> is mihi causa viae: volui mirabile factum
> cernere; vidi ipsum materno sanguine nasci.'
> excipit Uranie: 'quaecumque est causa videndi
> has tibi, diva, domos, animo gratissima nostro es.
> vera tamen fama est: est Pegasus huius origo
> fontis', et ad latices deduxit Pallada sacros.
> quae mirata diu factas pedis ictibus undas
>
> (*Met.* 5.256–64)

Apparent here, I think, as later in Book 5, is an awareness of what it is to bring the Muses into a literary work: the subject of this brief exchange between Pallas and Uranie, of more than passing interest to any *doctus poeta* or *doctus lector*, is a hoof-blow which marks the birth of poetry and of poetic inspiration as later ages know them.

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> 'vera tamen fama est: est Pegasus huius origo
> fontis'...
>
> (*Met.* 5.262–3)

Uranie, weighing her words carefully, as a good Muse should, provides us immediately with a modest illustration of how active Ovidian language can be, even in the most straightforward of sentences.

'Pegasus is the originator of this spring.' Riley's translation[3] is unexceptionable, as far as it goes; but it gives little idea of the suggestiveness here of Ovid's *origo*. In the first place, the word serves to advertise the fact that this story of an 'originator'

comes into a literary category especially beloved of poets in the Alexandrian tradition: as for instance in the case of the poetry enjoined on Gallus by Linus in Virgil's sixth *Eclogue*

> his [sc. calamis] tibi Grynei nemoris dicatur origo
> (Virgil, *Ecl.* 6.72)

origo functions as a quasi-technical term to suggest the Greek αἴτιον, and identifies the myth as an exercise in aetiology.[4]

Another, equally learned *origo* may come to mind too. Notably absent in this discussion of the *novi fontis* is the actual name of the spring, which it traditionally owes, of course, to this very myth of the ἴχνιον ὀξέος ἵππου (Callimachus, *Aet.* fr. 2.1): Ἵππου κρήνη, *Hippocrene*.[5] However, can one perhaps discern in Ovid's *est Pegasus huius origo | fontis* a pointer towards this missing element? *origo* is amongst other things the standard term in Latin for the etymological derivation of a word:[6] so that inherent in the statement here of Pegasus' responsibility for the new spring is, arguably, a hint at his further responsibility for its name.

This nuance is the more readily perceived because of a second verbal derivation implied in the sentence. Etymological word-play is a favourite mannerism of the learned poet;[7] and Uranie, no disgrace to her *doctas ... sorores* (*Met.* 5.255), is, I think, doubly allusive here. Pegasus, a horse, gives a name to *Hippo-crene*; but also his *own* name, *Pegasus*, makes him a peculiarly apposite figure to create any flow of water. *Pegasus* is derived in antiquity from πηγή, an etymology especially likely to command attention in that it occurs in Hesiod:[8]

> τῷ μὲν [sc. Πηγάσῳ] ἐπώνυμον ἦν, ὅτ' ἄρ' Ὠκεανοῦ παρὰ πηγὰς γένθ' ...
> (Hesiod, *Theog.* 282–3)

πηγή translates into Latin as *fons*; and a *fons* is precisely what Πήγ-*asus* originates in Uranie's etymologically charged sentence.[9]

Finally, note how close comes this *origo*, for all its mythological reference, to the language of normal geographical description. The *origo* of this *fons* is Pegasus; but other *origines*

fontium are more simply aquatic, as in Horace, *Carm.* 4.14.45–6 *fontium qui celat origines | Nilus* ... and, later, in Seneca's and Pliny's natural histories.[10]

Well, then, may Uranie preface her confirmation of the origin of the spring with the assertion *vera tamen fama est.* What Pallas has heard as a mere report (*Met.* 5.256 *fama ... nostras pervenit ad aures*) is indeed true: aetiologically, etymologically and geographically true.[11]

It may be worth pressing the word *fons* a little further in the light of all these *origines.* The cliché *fons et origo* is not yet current in Ovid's time;[12] but the former noun does have various figurative senses which render it almost synonymous with the latter. *fons* is even used by Varro in his treatise on the Latin language to refer to verbal derivation, as it is by Horace, with full consciousness of the metaphor, at *A.P.* 52–3 *et nova fictaque nuper habebunt verba fidem, si | Graeco fonte cadent parce detorta.*[13] What is the effect on Uranie's sentence of this near-equivalence? Does it encourage one to see the *fons* of the Hippocrene as itself a kind of symbol for all its own *origines*?[14]

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Be that last speculation as it may, there is one further kind of 'well-spring' which is of some importance in these verses. One's reading of any piece of Latin poetry is enriched by consideration of its literary sources. The Ovidian Persephone is to bear strong witness to this later in my discussion; and here in the opening chapter *Met.* 5.256–64 will prove no less amenable to analysis along these lines. However, *Quellenforschung* always finds itself hampered to a greater or lesser degree by *lacunae* in the ancient evidence; and in the present instance, the manner in which a literary historical picture takes shape will be such as to draw our attention to its incompleteness, as it has come down to us.

The first step is, strangely enough, forward in time:

> '... est Pegasus huius origo
> fontis', et ad latices deduxit Pallada sacros.
> quae mirata diu factas pedis ictibus undas
> (*Met.* 5.262–4)

Bömer's commentary, that mine of information for the Ovidian critic, gives the information ad loc. that line 264 offers the first attested instance in Latin of the *iunctura pedis ictus*. The second instance, we are told, is at Germanicus, *Arat.* 220; and an examination of the relevant part of the astronomical work in question reveals the parallel to be rather more interesting than Bömer seems to have allowed:

> Gorgonis hic proles; in Pierio Helicone,
> vertice cum summo nondum decurreret unda,
> Musaeos fontis dextri pedis ictibus hausit.
> inde liquor genitus nomen tenet: Hippocrenen
> fontes nomen habent; sed Pegasus aethere summo
> velocis agitat pennas et sidere gaudet
> (Germanicus, *Arat.* 218–23)

Not only is the *iunctura* in the same case and in the same metrical *sedes* as in *Met.* 5.264, which could be mere coincidence; but the *pes* here belongs to exactly the same mythological character as it does in the *Metamorphoses* passage and, moreover, to exactly the same moment in that character's mythological career. A firm literary historical link between the two instances of the *iunctura* can surely be considered established.[15]

But, before the obvious conclusion is drawn, viz. that the Germanican passage alludes directly to *Metamorphoses* 5, there is something else to be taken into account. Germanicus' poem is, remember, a translation, albeit a free one, of a celebrated Hellenistic astronomical work, the *Phaenomena* of Aratus; and a look at the Aratean lines rendered by Germanicus in the passage quoted above rather complicates matters:

> κεῖνον δὴ καί φασι καθ' ὑψηλοῦ Ἑλικῶνος
> καλὸν ὕδωρ ἀγαγεῖν εὐαλδέος Ἱπποκρήνης.
> οὐ γάρ πω Ἑλικὼν ἄκρος κατελείβετο πηγαῖς,
> ἀλλ' Ἵππος μιν ἔτυψε· τὸ δ' ἀθρόον αὐτόθεν ὕδωρ
> ἐξέχυτο πληγῇ προτέρου ποδός· οἱ δὲ νομῆες
> πρῶτοι κεῖνο ποτὸν διεφήμισαν Ἱπποκρήνην.
> ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν πέτρης ἀπολείβεται, οὐδέ ποτ' αὐτὸ
> Θεσπιέων ἀνδρῶν ἑκὰς ὄψεαι· αὐτὰρ ὁ Ἵππος
> ἐν Διὸς εἰλεῖται καί τοι πάρα θηήσασθαι
> (Aratus, *Phaen.* 216–24)

Germanicus varies, condenses and expands Aratus in many details; but one detail in which he does remain essentially faithful to his Greek 'original' is that very *iunctura* which we have been discussing in connexion with Ovid. Germanicus' *dextri pedis ictibus* is virtually a straight translation of Aratus' πληγῇ προτέρου ποδός, but for the greater specificity (assuming that *dextri* stands for *dextri e prioribus*) of the Latin epithet.

So how do we now plot the position of the Ovidian passage? If there is circumstantial identity between *Met.* 5.264 and the later Germanicus 220, as pointed out above, there is also circumstantial identity between *Met.* 5.264 and the earlier Aratus 219–20, the avowed model of the Germanican line. Germanicus' *pedis ictibus* demonstrably derives from Aratus' πληγῇ ... ποδός: is it not natural to trace Ovid's *pedis ictibus* too to the same source? Aratus 216–23 is, for all its brevity, the principal pre-Ovidian account of the origin of the Hippocrene to survive antiquity;[16] and, given the extraordinary esteem in which Aratus' *Phaenomena* was held by the *literati* of Rome, inspiring as it repeatedly did comment, allusion and wholesale translation, the importance of his version can safely be assumed.[17]

Thus, when Ovid's Pallas wonders at the *factas pedis ictibus undas*, it is more than a little tempting to see specific allusion to the ἀθρόον ... ὕδωρ which pours out πληγῇ προτέρου ποδός at the identical moment in Aratus 219–20. Note that Ovid's *pedis* occurs in the same metrical *sedes* as its etymological cognate ποδός, and that, despite syntactical differences, *undas* finds itself in the same *sedes* as its cognate ὕδωρ.[18] Ovid, unlike Germanicus, offers no equivalent for προτέρου: but, as I shall argue later, this is interpretable as a highly pointed omission.

Moreover, if the Aratean provenance of *Met.* 5.264 seems plausible, there is another detail in Ovid's version of events which one may refer to the same source. Aratus introduces the Hippocrene myth as something spread by report at 216 κεῖνον δὴ καί φασι ...; and, following up this common poetic mannerism[19] in an unusually precise way, he goes on to specify just who is responsible for having begun this process of dissemination: 220–1 οἱ δὲ νομῆες | πρῶτοι κεῖνο ποτὸν διεφήμισαν

Ἱππουκρήνην.[20] Ovid too uses the idea of report in his treatment of the myth; and, by a process not dissimilar to that which operates in the case of Aratus' φασι and διεφήμισαν, his etymologically cognate[21] *fama* (*Met.* 5.256) is followed up in such a way (*Met.* 5.262 *vera tamen fama est*) as to deepen our interest in the workings of the report concerned: see my discussion above. Thus the Ovidian detail may well owe something to the Aratean one. Is it going too far, indeed, to see here an allusive conceit whereby the *fama novi fontis* which has reached Pallas' ears in *Met.* 5.256 can actually be envisaged as filtering through from none other than those Aratean herdsmen who πρῶτοι κεῖνο ποτὸν διεφήμισαν in Aratus 221? Or, still more archly, can the source of Pallas' information be envisaged as being Aratus' poetry itself?

We must evidently consider anew where the Ovidian and the Germanican passages stand *vis-à-vis* each other. It is unlikely that each would have hit on precisely the same phrase independently in rendering Aratus 219–20. Ovid is on oath to no-one; and even for a closer translator than we know Germanicus habitually to have been, the resources of the Latin language open up many paths to Aratus 219–20 other than that of *pedis ictus* (to say nothing of the various combinations of number, case and line-position in which this previously unattested *iunctura* might itself occur).[22] One only has to consider the quite different verbal detail of Avienius' later version:

> ... cornuque excita repente
> lympha Camenalem fudit procul Hippocrenen
> (Avienius, *Arat.* 495–6)

No; more likely is that Germanicus, in rendering Aratus 219–20, deliberately built into his version a verbal acknowledgement of the earlier echo by Ovid of the same Aratean verses. The technique of alluding to a model both directly and through an intermediary is a well-established one in Roman poetry (see chapter 3, n.16 below).

This is a tidy enough reconstruction. However, beside the link between Germanicus and Ovid, as strong verbally as it is circumstantially, the suggested allusion in Ovid to Aratus him-

self may seem, although interestingly subtle, a little lacking in self-assertiveness. How much longer would Ovid's debt here to the Aratean tradition have remained buried, one is tempted to ask, without that post-Ovidian prompt from the adoptive son of Tiberius? Another venture into literary detective work will, I think, uncover more information about this tradition in which *Met.* 5.256–64 participates; and will put us in a position, if not to elucidate it, at least to account better for some of its obscurities. Again, the approach to be taken is a somewhat oblique one.

Ovid's exile in A.D. 8 found him with not one, but two major poems in his study awaiting publication. When the blow fell, both the hexameter *Metamorphoses* and the elegiac *Fasti* were, he says, in an unfinished state:

> carmina mutatas hominum dicentia formas,
> infelix domini quod fuga rupit opus
> (*Trist.* 1.7.13–14)
>
> sex ego Fastorum scripsi totidemque libellos,
> cumque suo finem mense volumen habet,
> idque tuo nuper scriptum sub nomine, Caesar,
> et tibi sacratum sors mea rupit opus
> . . . . . .
> dictaque sunt nobis, quamvis manus ultima coeptis
> defuit, in facies corpora versa novas
> (*Trist.* 2.549–52, 555–6)

. . . *rupit opus*: the verbal echo of *Trist.* 1.7.14, where the *opus* is the *Metamorphoses*, in *Trist.* 2.552, where it is the *Fasti*, further underlines the parallelism in circumstances. One suspects, of course, that the *Metamorphoses* was rather more, and the *Fasti* rather less, finished than Ovid seems to claim.[23] However, the fact that he can make such statements at all forbids one to believe that either work was disseminated in a completed state before A.D. 8. Whether Ovid switched between the two poems every minute, every day, every month or every year; whether, as some hold, he wrote most of the *Metamorphoses* before starting the *Fasti*;[24] or whether, as a few others argue, he wrote most of the *Fasti* before starting the *Metamorphoses*;[25] it should in any of these cases be evident that he was in a position to revise both poems freely up to the time of his exile. They

are in some sense what most Ovidian scholars have held them to be, simultaneous compositions.[26] Nor are there internal grounds for disputing this conclusion: even where the subject-matter of the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti* coincides, no consistent pattern of priority can be found to emerge.[27]

I mention this literary historical circumstance partly to prepare the way for my discussion of the Persephone myth in chapters 2–6. Its pertinence to the present context, however, arises from the existence in *Fast.* 3.455–6 of a second Ovidian version of the very moment under consideration here, viz. the moment of the mythological origin of the Hippocrene.

> iamque ubi caeruleum variabunt sidera caelum,
> suspice: Gorgonei colla videbis equi.
> creditur hic caesae gravida cervice Medusae
> sanguine respersis prosiluisse iubis.
> huic supra nubes et subter sidera lapso
> caelum pro terra, pro pede pinna fuit;
> iamque indignanti nova frena receperat ore
> cum levis Aonias ungula fodit aquas.
> nunc fruitur caelo, quod pinnis ante petebat,
> et nitidus stellis quinque decemque micat
> (*Fast.* 3.449–58)

We have here a nice piece of circumstantial evidence supporting our findings about the literary origins of the *Metamorphoses* version. There were no stars in *Met.* 5.256–64; but the passage seemed nevertheless to be rooted in a piece of astronomical poetry by Aratus. Now in this other Ovidian version of the myth, belonging to the same phase in the poet's career, there *are* stars; and there is good reason to think, moreover, that they are Aratean stars. The fact is that, just as on its aetiological side,

> tempora cum causis Latium digesta per annum
> (*Fast.* 1.1)

the *Fasti* looks back to Callimachus, so the main inspiration for the poem's astronomy,

> lapsaque sub terras ortaque signa canam
> (*Fast.* 1.2)

famously derives from none other than Aratus.[28]

Here in the third book of the *Fasti*, just as in Aratus, the origin of the Hippocrene is mentioned in the course of a discussion of the constellation of the Horse. Note especially how Ovid ends his discussion at *Fast.* 3.457–8 by moving straight from the Hippocrene to a concluding remark about the Horse's place in the sky, just as Aratus does at lines 223–4 of the *Phaenomena*. Perhaps, moreover, the exhortation to look for the constellation with which the Ovidian discussion begins (*Fast.* 3.450 *suspice ... videbis*) may be seen as influenced by the remark, also explicitly addressed to the star-gazing reader, with which the Aratean one ends (Aratus 224 καί τοι πάρα θηήσασθαι).

Nor is this the end of the parallelism between the literary connexions of Ovid's two references to the Hippocrene myth. Not only do they both seem to recall Aratus, but the *Fasti* passage, as well as the *Metamorphoses* one, looks as if it may well have served as an intermediary between Aratus and his later translator Germanicus. Compare the three versions of that concluding remark about the Horse's place in the sky:

> ... αὐτὰρ ὁ Ἵππος
> ἐν Διὸς εἰλεῖται καί τοι πάρα θηήσασθαι
> (Aratus 223–4)

> nunc fruitur caelo, quod pinnis ante petebat,
> et nitidus stellis quinque decemque micat
> (*Fast.* 3.457–8)

> ... sed Pegasus aethere summo
> velocis agitat pennas et sidere gaudet
> (Germanicus 222–3)

Quite apart from those wings, Germanicus does not get the touch of 'inner life' in *sidere gaudet* from Aratus' ἐν Διὸς εἰλεῖται, and it is more than a little tempting to trace it to Ovid's *fruitur caelo*. *fruitur* can imply, though it need not (thus *frui* 'to have as one's lot'[29]), an imputation of emotion to the Horse; but *gaudet* enforces the implication and intensifies the emotion. Thus a line of descent can plausibly be traced from Aratus' emotionally neutral version through Ovid's *fruitur* to Germanicus' *gaudet*.

A further detail in the *Fasti* passage begs comparison with Germanicus' version of the Horse constellation:

> iamque indignanti nova frena receperat ore
> (*Fast.* 3.455)

> spumanti mandit sed qua ferus ore lupata
> (Germanicus 212)

In Aratus, where the Horse of heaven and Hippocrene is not named as Pegasus, a bridle, like wings, is altogether absent.[30] Ovid adds it; and Germanicus' line may betray specific indebtedness to Ovid's in its reproduction of the configuration *-anti . . . ore.*

Further than this it is not safe to venture. However, these new data do encourage speculation. Germanicus now seems to have gone to remarkable lengths, even for a *doctus poeta*, to enrich his Greek original's account of the Horse constellation. To have located and used as an intermediary one Aratean allusion from an independent poem (i.e. not a translation of Aratus) would be commendable enough; to locate and conflate *two* such allusions, and from different Ovidian poems, suggests a truly labyrinthine approach to the translation of the Aratean episode. Perhaps that was indeed Germanicus' approach. However, a more economical explanation of the patterns of allusion discovered does suggest itself – an explanation which, let it be emphasised, is and must remain entirely conjectural.

The fact is that at some point in his career Ovid himself, like Germanicus after him, produced a version (an abbreviated one, it seems) of Aratus' *Phaenomena*.[31] It is natural to assume that it was an early work: the translation of the well-known Hellenistic poem is surely the sort of exercise that Ovid would have set himself while first trying out his powers, rather than in his maturity, when daring innovation in subject-matter was his rule.[32]

Thus, could it be that Ovid, a poet given more than any other to self-echo,[33] drew for his allusions to Aratus in *Met.* 5.256–64 and *Fast.* 3.449–58 on the language of his own earlier translation of the relevant part of the *Phaenomena*; so that when Germanicus seems to us, with our limited access to

Augustan writings, to be elaborately pulling together recondite allusions in the *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti* for his version of Aratus' Horse constellation, his eye is not in fact on those two passages at all, but on their immediate common source: what Germanicus is echoing is, more obscurely for us but much more naturally for him, the translation of the Horse episode in Ovid's *Phaenomena*, his direct and possibly his most important precursor in the Latin Aratean tradition?

A corollary is worth stating. If things were as I propose, then Ovid's allusion to Aratus in *Met.* 5.256–64 and *Fast.* 3.449–58 will originally have stood out as such more clearly than it does now, by virtue of the additional signalling given in each passage by verbal echoes of Ovid's own earlier *Phaenomena*.[34]

But enough of guesswork: the picture resists final completion. However, what has emerged is not inconsiderable. In the past, investigators have always traced the inspiration of the Hippocrene passage in *Met.* 5.256–64 to Nicander's lost *Heteroioumena*, thus bringing the modern reader up against something of an impasse.[35] It is indeed the case that a brief prose epitome at Antoninus Liberalis 9 allows us with some certainty to trace the basic idea for the Heliconian song contest just below in Ovid's narrative (*Met.* 5.300ff.) to the fourth book of the *Heteroioumena*: the correspondence is amongst those most frequently cited in discussions of the influence of Nicander's poem on the *Metamorphoses*.[36] And it is also the case that the Nicandrian version of the contest appears to have included in its action, just before the transformation of the losers into birds, a blow from the hoof of Pegasus:

ὅτε μὲν οὖν αἱ θυγατέρες ᾄδοιεν τοῦ Πιέρου, ἐπήχλυεν πάντα καὶ οὐδὲν ὑπήκουεν πρὸς τὴν χορείαν, ὑπὸ δὲ Μουσῶν ἵστατο μὲν οὐρανὸς καὶ ἄστρα καὶ θάλασσα καὶ ποταμοί, ὁ δ' Ἑλικὼν ηὔξετο κηλούμενος ὑφ' ἡδονῆς εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, ἄχρις αὐτὸν βουλῇ Ποσειδῶνος ἔπαυσεν ὁ Πήγασος τῇ ὁπλῇ τὴν κορυφὴν πατάξας

(Antoninus Liberalis 9.2)

Rival Pierid singers metamorphosed by the Muses (the name is elsewhere in the mythological tradition applied to the Muses themselves) are unique to Antoninus' report of Nicander and to *Met.* 5.300ff.;[37] so that, even before one takes into account

the inherent appropriateness of any allusion in the *Metamorphoses* to that previous poem on tranformations, Ovid's use of the Nicandrian song contest for his song contest in the latter part of *Metamorphoses* 5 looks overwhelmingly likely.

Given that likelihood, it also seems reasonable to infer that this same Nicandrian passage did something to prompt Ovid's account, adjacent to his song contest, of the momentous hoof-blow of Pegasus. However, it should already have been clear before the present study that the *detail* of *Met.* 5.256–64 was unlikely to be Nicandrian. Whereas Pegasus' act constitutes an essential part of the song contest in the *Heteroioumena*, the two events are associated in *Metamorphoses* 5 only by conversational juxtaposition in the ears of Pallas; and, whereas Ovid's concern is first and last with the flow of the Hippocrene, the Nicandrian account seems to focus on a bizarre swelling of the mountain itself,[38] to the complete exclusion (in Antoninus' epitome at least) of any mention of the spring.

Working from a wholly different starting-point, we have traced Ovid's version of the Hippocrene myth to a second, distinct literary tradition, that of Aratus.[39] For us this tradition is surely the more interesting one. Whereas any peculiarly Nicandrian touches in *Met.* 5.256–64 are effectively veiled from our sight by the blandness of Antoninus' synopsis, the debt to Aratus, as my discussion here perhaps shows, is sufficiently recoverable to allow a real attempt at literary critical appreciation.

Maybe this was the side of the passage's literary history which Ovid regarded as most important too. At any rate, one element in his presentation of the myth, which has not so far been considered, is interpretable as a sly programmatic[40] hint pointing to its Aratean inspiration. Out of the nine Muses, the one who speaks up in *Met.* 5.260ff. to confirm the *fama* about the origin of the Hippocrene, and who actually leads Pallas to the sacred spring in *Met.* 5.263, is Uranie. Rigid differentiation of the Muses' literary functions is post-Augustan: but is it not rather appropriate that the self-appointed guide to this particular Hippocrene should be that Muse whose very name (Uranie, Greek Οὐρανίη) already marks her as an expert in

the field on which Ovid draws for details of his treatment here, viz. astronomical poetry?[41]

And a final underlining of the Aratean allusion may be discerned in the *positioning* of *Met.* 5.256–64 within the structure of Ovid's narrative.[42] The visit to the Hippocrene is immediately preceded in the *Metamorphoses* by the rescue of Andromeda, chained to a rock through the folly of her mother Cassiope, and the resultant battle in the royal hall of her father Cepheus (*Met.* 4.663–5.241). An apt conjunction; for in the structure of Aratus' *Phaenomena*, the description of the Horse who is the origin of the Hippocrene (*Phaen.* 205–24) is immediately preceded by a family of three constellations (*Phaen.* 179–81): none other than Cepheus (*Phaen.* 182–7), Cassiope (*Phaen.* 188–96) and Andromeda (*Phaen.* 197–204).

iv

One detail which may be especially sharpened by recognition of its Aratean origins comes in the line which has been the main focus of attention in these recent pages. Where Aratus writes that the Hippocrene first flowed πληγῇ προτέρου ποδός (220), and Germanicus later translates *dextri pedis ictibus* (220), in the *Metamorphoses* the spring shown by Uranie to Pallas is created, more simply, *pedis ictibus* (5.264). Ovid's omission of an adjective corresponding to Aratus' προτέρου or to Germanicus' *dextri* leaves *pedis* unqualified: but this, I would suggest, far from impoverishing his version of the phrase, actually opens up in it a new stratum of meaning.

Remember that we are on Mount Helicon, a place uniquely devoted to the making of poetry, and that what is under discussion here is the fount of poetic inspiration itself. In this environment, do not the blows of Pegasus' hoof exploit an ambiguity available in the phrase *pedis ictus* to take on a distinctly prosodic aspect? Few word-plays are more familiar in Latin poetry than the one between the bodily and metrical senses of the word *pes*.[43] Sometimes the pun is quite plainly spelled out, as at Catullus 14.21–3 *vos hinc interea valete abite | illuc, unde malum pedem attulistis, | saecli incommoda, pessimi*

poetae, or, even more, Horace, *A.P.* 80 (where the foot to be 'shod' is an iambus) *hunc socci cepere pedem grandesque cothurni*, Ovid, *Am.* 3.1.8 (of the personified Elegy) *et, puto, pes illi longior alter erat*, and *Trist.* 1.1.15–16 *vade, liber, verbisque meis loca grata saluta:* | *contingam certe quo licet illa pede*; more often it is obliquely evoked. And what of *ictus*? This word for the 'blows' administered by Pegasus' hoof is also, as it happens, the technical term in Latin for the 'beat' of a metrical *pes*: see e.g. Horace, *A.P.* 251–3 *syllaba longa brevi subiecta vocatur iambus,* | *pes citus; unde etiam trimetris accrescere iussit* | *nomen iambeis, cum senos redderet ictus*, and *Carm.* 4.6.35–6 *Lesbium servate pedem meique pollicis ictum.*[44] Is not Ovid, then, foreshadowing the *result* of the flow of the Hippocrene through a covert pun in his description of its cause? The blows of a horse's hoof are ultimately responsible for the creation of rhythmical verse: *pedis ictus* of one kind will lead to *pedis ictus* of another.[45]

Without labouring the point, one may perhaps suggest a corresponding ambiguity in the grammatical case of *ictibus*: the *factas pedis ictibus undas*, the 'waters made *by* the blows of the hoof', are, fleetingly, 'waters made *for* rhythmical verse'.[46]

There exist two instances of the *iunctura pedis ictus* from later in the first century A.D. which lie rather interestingly in between the two poles of meaning under review: Pliny, *Nat.* 2.209 *sunt et in Nymphaeo parvae* [*insulae*], *Saliares dictae, quoniam in symphoniae cantu ad ictus modulantium pedum moventur*; Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.4.51 *tempora ... metiuntur et pedum et digitorum ictu.* In each case the *pedes* are unambiguously of the bodily kind; but in each case the *ictus* which these *pedes* stamp out are distinctly prosodic: no random impacts, they are the beats of a regular rhythm. The fact is that there is no complete separation in Latin usage between *ictus* as a term of prosody and *ictus* denoting an actual bodily blow: some oscillation in thought between metre in the abstract and the visible movements which accompany it is inherent in any ancient discussion of prosody.[47]

This circumstance makes the word-play in *Met.* 5.264 all the more natural; and it may even encourage a secondary sugges-

tion, whereby the *ictus* of Pegasus' bodily *pes* are fantastically envisaged as moving in time to the *ictus* of the metrical *pes* which will be the consequence of his action.

V

> ... et ad latices deduxit Pallada sacros.
> quae mirata diu factas pedis ictibus undas
> (*Met.* 5.263–4)

In view of this latest manifestation in *Met.* 5.264 of the power of poetry on Mount Helicon, can the verb in the preceding line, I wonder, remain entirely innocent? Uranie 'led down', *deduxit*, Pallas to the sacred waters of the Hippocrene. The walk to the spring arises naturally out of the immediately preceding conversation; but the choice of verb seems to be such as to add a further nuance to Uranie's playing of the Muse's part.

The fact is that *deducere*, although a commonplace word, carries for a writer like Ovid some very powerful programmatic associations. With a noun like *carmen* as object, *deducere* functions as a key term of Augustan poetics, descriptive of the kind of composition which adheres to the Μοῦσαν ... λεπταλέην enjoined at Callimachus, *Aet.* fr. 1.23–4:

> ... 'pastorem, Tityre, pinguis
> pascere oportet ovis, deductum dicere carmen'[48]
> (Virgil, *Ecl.* 6.4–5)

> at tibi saepe novo deduxi carmina versu
> (Propertius 1.16.41)

The origins of the usage are not entirely clear; but it comes to be regarded as a metaphor from *deducere* 'to draw out a thread in spinning, spin'.[49] Just as the spinner spins a thin thread from the wool on the distaff, so the Callimachean poet forms something thin and fine from a mass of formless material:

> cum lamentamur non apparere labores
> nostros et tenui deducta poemata filo
> (Horace, *Ep.* 2.1.224–5)

deducere is a word, therefore, which crops up again and again in discussions of poetic composition;[50] and it seems to me a piquant touch here in *Met.* 5.263 that Uranie, even whilst doing something as simple as walking about, should not be able altogether to shake off the language of her job: in the very detail of her deportment, she reminds us of her status as Muse.

If such a reference to programmatic *deducere* appears implausibly oblique, it may be helpful to consider some other instances in Ovid of what seems to be equally allusive evocation of the term.

But first let us take the opportunity to look at the proem of the *Metamorphoses* itself, where *deducere* is used programmatically in a way which, while more straightforward, is by no means entirely so. In the poet's opening request to the gods

> ... primaque ab origine mundi
> ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen
> (*Met.* 1.3–4)

perpetuum ... carmen has long been seen to imply an alignment of the *Metamorphoses* with the ἓν ἄεισμα διηνεκές abhorred at Callimachus, *Aet.* fr. 1.3;[51] but it is only recently that a second, opposing implication in the sentence has also been recovered.[52] With reference to the chronology of the *carmen*, the imperative *deducite* means simply 'bring down' or 'carry through'. However, a further, specifically poetic suggestion in the word strongly asserts itself too. For, if the gods do what Ovid asks them to do here, viz. *deducite ... carmen*, then what will be the literal result of their action but, precisely, a *deductum carmen*? In the very act of repudiating Callimachean principles, Ovid seems to let them in again by the back door. More of this paradox later: for now, simply let the slightly allusive nature of the employment here of *deducere* be noted.

The obliquity of reference envisaged in *Met.* 5.263 is clearly of a greater order of magnitude than this; but consider the following instances, in which, as in the present passage, *deducere* takes as object something quite other than a *carmen*:[53]

> risit Amor pallamque meam pictosque cothurnos
> sceptraque privata tam cito sumpta manu;